or soft loan and forwarding their Structural Adjustment Loan (SAL) to the World Bank to help them overcome the current financial crisis;

(b) if so, the extent of one-time grant and Structural Adjustment Loan sought by Maharashtra and other States; and

(c) what is the response of the Central Government to the State Government of Maharashtra and other State Governments' demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Madam.

(b) The States of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Orissa, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have sought SAL assistance. The amount requested varies from US $ 200 million to US $ 750 million.

(c) The revised guidelines for availing Structural Adjustment Loan assistance, drawn up in consultation with the States have been issued by Department of Expenditure on 24th October, 2005. The State Governments are now required to send their proposals in terms of the revised guidelines.

Merger of Bank of India with Union Bank of India

2957. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the suggestions have been received for merger of Bank of India with Union Bank of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what are the reasons for this merger?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Government has not received any proposal for merger of Bank of India and Union Bank of India till date.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.